

# The Ohio Teacher Incentive Fund



Ohio proposes a statewide system of rewarding teachers and school leaders for high levels of performance and solid achievement with competitive compensation and career opportunities. The Ohio Teacher Incentive Fund (OTIF) will provide opportunities for teacher development, differentiated leadership roles, and incentive pay.

## Needs Assessment Results and General Information

Statewide, Ohio struggles with teacher retention. In a state attrition study, data suggest that from 2001-2007, the state lost almost 31 percent of teachers within 5 years. In all four of the urban districts that are participating in OTIF, the percentage of students who received free and reduced-price lunch in 2006 was between 63.5 percent (Toledo) and 94.6 percent (Cleveland). The achievement gap in Ohio affects African-American children and economically disadvantaged students.

## Background

OTIF has built on existing models, including the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in Cincinnati and Columbus and the Toledo Review and Alternative Compensation System (TRACS). Cleveland has implemented the Promoting Educator Advancement in Cleveland (PEAC), which was rolled out in September 2007.

Under OTIF, state standards are being established for teacher and principal evaluation systems that (1) ensure that evaluations are fair, credible, and evidence-based; include multiple measures of

performance in both knowledge and skills; and are linked to student academic progress; (2) align with Ohio's teacher and principal standards; and (3) suggest professional development to enhance future performance in areas that are not meeting expectations. These standards will then serve as benchmarks for the design, development, and implementation of evaluation and compensation systems in districts across the state. Principal evaluation guidelines have been created and are being piloted in four OTIF districts, as well as in nine other districts.

The second pilot phase of the Ohio Principal Evaluation System will be expanded to 30 districts and will include training modules and a two-year commitment to the project. Standards for superintendents have also been developed and a training manual written. Actual training in the use of the tool will begin this fall with 60 superintendents and board members from across the state. Last April, a writing team completed work on a set of Teacher Evaluation Guidelines, and in early October, the work will continue to develop models of teacher evaluation that are linked to student achievement and also to develop a model PAR Program.

<b>Location(s)</b>	Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, Cleveland, Ohio
<b>Award Date</b>	November 2006
<b>Duration</b>	5 years
<b>Partners</b>	Ohio Department of Education; Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo city schools; and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching

In TAP schools, teachers are compensated for their teaching skills, additional responsibilities, and student learning. In the TRACS system, teachers are rewarded when they (1) collaboratively succeed in significantly raising student achievement; (2) assume additional curriculum, instructional, and school improvement responsibilities and leadership; and (3) volunteer for placement in difficult teaching assignments and demonstrate improved results in student achievement.

TAP in Cincinnati and Columbus provides awards from a pool created annually: \$2,000 per educator to provide performance payouts based on demonstrated knowledge and skills. Under TRACS-B/CTIS-B, incentives for teachers and administrators tied to school performance include as much as \$2,000 for meeting annual improvement goals (see Evaluation below). In Toledo, teachers and administrators can earn \$2,000 if all three goals are met and \$1,000 if two of three goals are met. In the PEAC program, all three goals need to be met to be awarded an incentive. These amounts and goals are negotiated annually by each of the district's governing board. The teacher performance element of TRACS-C/PEAC-C provides a career ladder for teachers in three-status levels, with each level reflecting more responsibility. Incentives range from 5 to 15 percent of salary as teachers move up the ladder in Toledo. TRACS-C/PEAC-C teachers will receive \$2,500 to \$5,000 for their work, which will depend on the project/level the teacher chooses.

### **Evaluation**

Under TAP, teachers are observed as often as six times each year by several trained and certified evaluators. As part of the evaluation, the value-added gains the teacher produces, plus the school achievement gains from one year to the next, are incorporated. TRACS and PEAC support and enhance the continuous improvement process in which districts must set two academic and one related improvement goal (e.g., school attendance, graduation rate).

Academic growth is measured by the percentage gains on the Ohio Performance Index or by meeting an increase in the number and percentage of Ohio grade card indicators achieved. Also, TRACS uses performance-based evaluation rubrics based on the national standards of effective instruction, as well as Danielson's "Framework for Teaching." The TRACS assessment system includes peer ratings, classroom observations, assessment of written communication skills, and a standards-based portfolio. In Cleveland, PEAC has a very similar system in place, and 126 teachers have qualified to be PEAC educators. Ohio's external TIF evaluator is Westat, and it has recently completed its Year 3 external evaluation. In addition, Westat has completed three policy briefs entitled "Lessons Learned from the Ohio Teacher Incentive Fund." A fourth brief is under discussion, its purpose may well be individual communication pieces tailored to community needs.

### **Resources**

State general revenue and Title II funds will provide matching funds for OTIF. The goal is to help districts become self-sustaining. Each year of the grant requires the participating districts to pick up a larger share of the funds.

### **Data Systems**

The Ohio Assessment System aligns with state academic content standards for grades 3 to 8 in reading and math and with the Ohio Graduation Test for high school students. Value-added growth for all schools, a component of the state accountability system, will be included on the 2007-2008 state and local report cards. Other short-term assessment systems are in place in the OTIF partnering districts. Data from various existing data management systems will be used to determine teacher and principal effectiveness for incentive eligibility.

### Year 3 Activities

In the three years since ODE received the Federal grant, a great deal of work has occurred in the individual districts. Columbus and Cincinnati have now implemented TAP in 12 schools. Ohio held its second Summit in April, which centered around Teacher Evaluation and Best Practice. James Stronge and Janet Gless were the featured keynotes. The districts continue to focus on best practice and the examination of student data to drive instruction. Toledo and Cleveland have made good progress in implementing their model programs. In addition, Cleveland staff spent time with Toledo staff and adopted TPS's PAR model and rolled it out using their PEAC-C teachers as advisors. It was truly a year spent "getting it right". During the creation of the "briefs" and as a part of the external evaluation, a great deal of survey work was completed. Teachers surveyed in the four participating districts expressed high levels of support for TIF. OTIF also appears to have leveraged the value of collaborative work among teachers. Seventy-five percent of teachers think that they are a better teacher because of the support and collaboration at their school. Additionally, 97 percent of the teachers and administrators believe that student achievement improves as a result of this collaborative effort.

### Outlook for Year 4

Ohio is hosting its third Summit in spring of 2010. Day one of the summit will be focused on bringing together educators from the Ohio TIF districts along with key stakeholder groups and policy leaders in Ohio to share best practices that have emanated from each of the four partner districts. Program results and research collected as part of Ohio TIF will be shared. Break-out sessions will allow participants to learn about effective practices from Ohio TIF districts. Lessons learned by the four partner districts will be shared so as to inform policy recommendations related to performance-based compensation systems for teachers and principals in Ohio.

Day two of the policy summit will be opened up to educators statewide, providing an opportunity to expand the dialogue and focus on the key components of the TIF program. Ohio TIF districts, other districts in the state, and other TIF programs across the country will be invited to submit proposals to present best practice models in the areas of:

- Performance evaluation models for teachers and principals that include peer assistance and review models;
- Supporting teachers and school leaders working in high-need schools through high-quality professional development;
- Developing and implementing multiple career paths for teachers, including differentiated licensure systems;
- Negotiating collective bargaining agreements that support pay for performance models.

Ohio has additionally been recognized for their thorough and comprehensive approach to the evaluation of their TIF program. They plan to conduct a follow-up study documenting learning and insights that have been gained during the first four years. The work that has taken place to date, documenting issues encountered and lessons learned can serve to benefit other school districts in Ohio and nationally.